

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
  
Plaintiff,  
  
v.  
  
GUOLONG LI,  
  
Defendant.

CASE NO. CR20-0171-JCC-6  
  
ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on Defendant's motion to for a video sentencing hearing (Dkt. No. 243). Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained herein.

Defendant pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute controlled substances. (Dkt. Nos. 221, 224, 232.) His sentencing is scheduled for May 3, 2022. (Dkt. No. 221.) Defendant moves to proceed with his hearing remotely. (*See* Dkt. No. 243.) The Government does not oppose.

Under this Court's General Orders, felony sentencings may proceed by if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice." W.D. Wash. General Order 04-20 (March 3, 2020); *see* W.D. Wash. General Orders 05-22 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending duration of General Order 04-20 through June 20, 2022); *see also* W.D. Wash. General Order 04-22 (March 3, 2022) (allowing for in-person courtroom use "at the discretion of the presiding

1 judge).

2 Defendant, who is on an appearance bond pending sentencing, is currently residing in  
 3 Chicago, Illinois. (Dkt. No. 243 at 1.) As a result, he must travel to Seattle for an in-person  
 4 hearing. Yet, at present, the Transportation Security Administration is no longer mandating mask  
 5 usage while travelling on aircraft within the United States. *See* TRANSPORTATION SECURITY  
 6 ADMINISTRATION: STATEMENT REGARDING FACE MASK USE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, (April  
 7 18, 2022); *see also Health Freedom Def. Fund, Inc. v. Biden*, 2022 WL 1134138 slip op. (M.D.  
 8 Fla. 2022) (order vacating the mask mandate). Defendant seeks a remote hearing, in part, to  
 9 avoid the risk of contracting COVID-19 or infecting others while travelling. (Dkt. No. 243 at 3.)

10 Defendant would like to move forward with sentencing now in order to “accept  
 11 responsibility, achieve resolution, and gain some certainty about his future,” but do so through a  
 12 remote proceeding to avoid the risk of COVID-19 infection. (*Id.*) Defendant has a strong interest  
 13 in the speedy resolution of his sentence. Under these circumstances, the Court FINDS that  
 14 Defendant’s sentencing hearing should not be delayed until such time as the risk of COVID-19  
 15 infection while travelling is further reduced. Doing so would risk serious harm to the interests of  
 16 justice.

17 For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant’s motion to proceed with his  
 18 sentencing hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 243). The parties should contact the  
 19 Courtroom Deputy 24 hours before the hearing to request login or call-in information.

20  
 21 DATED this 22nd day of April 2022.

22  
 23  
 24 

25 John C. Coughenour  
 26 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE